(c) what future Government have disbursed during the last two years especially in Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) what future steps Government would like to take in giving credit to farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) To ensure that farmers receive Short Term Production Credit at 7% per annum upto the upper limit of Rs.3 lacs on the principal amount, Government of India has formulated a scheme in consultation with other stake holders including implimented Ministry of Agriculture during 2006-07. The scheme is being since Kharif 2006, the Government is providing interest subvention of 2% per annum to Public Sector Banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Cooperative Banks on their lending from their own resources and refinance at concessional rates to cooperative banks and RRBs on their borrowings from NABARD.

The condition for availing this refinance is that Cooperative Banks provide crop loans upto Rs. 3.00 lakh per borrower at a rate of interest of 7% per annum.

(c) The credit flow to the agriculture and allied sector in the country during the years, 2005-06 and 2006-07 has been Rs.1,80,486 crore and Rs. 2,03,297 crore respectively. Of this, the banks have disbursed Rs. 15,980 crore and Rs. 19,344 crore respectively in Andhra Pradesh.

(d) Banks have been instructed to achieve financial outreach through provision of a General Credit Card to households, opening "No Frills" accounts with limited overdraft facilities, to extend financial outreach by utilizing services of Civil Society Organisation like Farmers Clubs, NGOs, Post Offices as Business Facilitator/Business Correspondent Model. Besides, banks are lending to groups through the mechanism of Self Help Groups, Joint Liability Group and Tenant Farmers Groups.

Simplification of Transfer of deceased accounts

347. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that in case of death of a sole account holder, payment from account is made to the successor after a long documentation or on the basis of succession certification;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps Government would take to simplify the procedure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has observed, that the complex procedures, applicable to settlement of claim of a deceased depositor, cause considerable distress to family members. To simplify the process of settlement of claims of deceased depositors, RBI has advised banks to, *inter alia*, ensure the following:-

(i) While making payment to the survivor(s)/nominee(s) of the deceased depositor, banks should desist from insisting on production of succession certificate, letter of administration or probate, etc.,

irrespective of the amount standing to the credit of the deceased account holder.

(ii) In case where the deceased depositor had not made any nomination or for the accounts other than those styled as "either or survivor" (such as single or jointly operated accounts), banks may fix a mininum threshold limit up to which claims in respect of the deceased depositors could be settled without insisting on production of any documentation other than a letter of indemnity.

(iii) Claims in respect of deceased depositors are settled and payments released to survivor(s)/nominee(s) within a period not exceeding 15 days from the date of receipt of the claim subject to the production of proof of death of the depositor and suitable identification of the claimant (s) to the bank's satisfaction.

(iv) Wide publicity is given and guidance provided to deposit account holders on the benefits of the nomination facility and the survivorship clause.

Vacant posts reserved for SCs/STs/OBCs

348. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of vacancies/posts reserved for SCs, STs and OBCs are lying vacant since long in this Department and its subordinate offices:

(b) if so, since when these posts are lying vacant and the details of action so far to fill up the vacant posts of the above categories; and

(c) by when all the vacant posts are likely to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2006

349. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 2310 given in the Rajya Sabha on 20th March, 2007 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2006 regarding increasing of FDI in Insurance Sector was referred to a Group of Ministers for clearance long back; and

(b) if so, by when the said Bill is likely to be cleared by Government for introduction in Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The matter is still under consideration of the Group of Ministers.